



## ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT 2008

### United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan

### Strengthening State Building through Strategic Government Communication (SSBSGC)

[01-01-2008 – 31-12-2008]



**Project ID: 00059207**  
**Duration: 01 January 2008- 31 December 2010**  
**Component of Strategic Plan (2008-2011) Strengthening**  
**Total Budget: USD 3,263,966**  
**Unfunded: USD 0.00**  
**Implementing Partners: Office of President**  
**Spokesperson (OPS)**

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive summary</b> .....	3
I. Context .....	4
II. Performance review.....	5
Progress review .....	5
1. Overall progress towards the CPAP outcome and output(s) .....	5
2. Capacity development.....	5
3. Impact on direct and indirect beneficiaries.....	6
<b>Implementation strategy review</b> .....	6
1. Participatory/consultative processes .....	6
2. Quality of partnerships.....	6
3. National ownership .....	7
4. Sustainability.....	7
<b>Management effectiveness review</b> .....	7
1. Quality of monitoring .....	7
2. Timely delivery of outputs .....	8
3. Resources allocation .....	8
4. Cost-effective use of inputs .....	8
III. Project results summary.....	9
IV. Implementation challenges .....	10
Project risks and actions.....	10
Project issues and actions.....	10
V. Lessons learnt and next steps .....	10
VI. Financial status and utilization.....	11
<b>Financial status</b> .....	11
<b>Financial utilization</b> .....	11

## Executive summary

Strengthening State Building through Strategic Government Communication (SSBSGC) project initiated by UNDP and funded by DfID contributed to 1) improvements in the communication system within the Office of the Presidential Spokesman (OPS), including quality of the President's press conferences, meetings, visits at national and international levels; 2) improvements in the quality of monitoring of the national and international media, and the production of the monitoring bulletin twice a day presented to the President and relevant departments within Office of the President (OoP); 3) improvement in the coordination component of OPS with media at different levels of communication; and 4) enhancement of the capacity of OPS for effective communication with Afghan people, national media and international audiences in a sustainable way -- which is essential for the overall success of the government communication in rehabilitation, development and other relevant issues.

The project has made significant achievements in the reporting period although it faced delay at start up stage. Security in part of the country and poor coordination amongst media stakeholders in Kabul and at the sub-national level were the main challenges during project implementation.

## I. Context

The overall objective of the project is to have a Government communication strategy developed and implemented by a capable OPS structure, leading towards public sector capacity building through: development of civil service at the central and sub-national levels; establishment of accountability mechanism and enhancement of information management for better service delivery; meets the democratic state and government institutions strengthened at national and sub-national levels to govern and ensure the delivery of quality public services including security with special attention to marginalized groups.

The comprehensive design of the project strategy is to maintain and enhance the existing performance standards of the OPS to match international standards of performance and respond to the common internal needs of Afghan at national and sub-national levels. The project aims to ensure that the OPS is reformed and aligned with the developed communication strategy to function as an effective media and communication arm of the OoP.

The project contributes towards promoting Good Governance and Rule of Law throughout the country, and by enhancing transparency that can result in reducing corruption. Also it contributes to Programme four/sector four of the ANDS in enabling the media "as independent, pluralistic and accessible to Afghan women and men throughout the country, thereby promoting an open and democratic society."

The project outcomes contribute towards UNDAF outcome 2: The democratic state and government institutions strengthened at national and sub-national levels to govern and insure the delivery of quality public services including security with special attention to marginalized groups.

The main two outputs of the project are: 1) An effective government communication strategy is developed and government communication with its citizens is improved; and 2) Capacity of OPS and provincial information ability developed for the implementation of an effective communication strategy. Both of the above enhance the knowledge and awareness of Afghans on the government policies and efforts on the reconstruction and development as well as security process in the country, which leads towards assurance of the sustainability of the above mentioned services.

The project targeted outcomes will ensure its contribution into the UNDAF outcome 2 as mentioned above.

The challenges to achieving the expected targets include: 1) Lack of reliable security in part of the country that has badly affected the smooth flow of the project activities; 2) Insufficient coordination amongst the relevant stakeholders at national and sub-national levels; 3) Low capacity of the OPS in respect to HR and material, which have reduced the effectiveness of the project's target achievements.

## II. Performance review

### *Progress review*

#### 1. Overall progress towards the CPAP outcome and output(s)

Strengthening State Building through Strategic Government Communication (SSBSGC) project coordinated the efforts regarding communication strategy development, including consultations with the relevant stakeholders and hiring a well qualified consultant. The consultant, to date, has developed a work plan, and begun basic activities, including professional meetings with stakeholders (Spokespersons of the government ministries, donor community representatives and other relevant individuals). These efforts are in support of the development of an effective government communication strategy.

The developed communication strategy can be an effective tool for smooth operation in the communication and media sector at national and sub-national levels. Where a strong OPS will come on board for implementation of such strategy. Well equipped provincial hubs operating under OPS, with their information collection and analytical strength, will support the quality government communication system, at all levels. This effort will strengthen the government's information management capacity by increasing access of the public to information and ensuring broad public awareness of government achievements.

The project contributed towards promoting Good Governance and Rule of Law throughout the country, enhancing transparency that can result in reducing corruption. Also contributed to Programme four/sector four of the ANDS in enabling the media "as independent, pluralistic and accessible to Afghan women and men throughout the country, thereby promoting an open and democratic society."

The project outcomes contributed towards UNDAF benchmark which aims that the "Government at all level including communities and individuals are better enabled to realize improved governance based on the rules of law and human rights by 2008."

The project targeted outcomes will ensure that the "Democratic State and Government Institutions strengthened at all level to govern and insure quality public services through advocacy, policy advice and capacity development"; and that "government information management capacities enhanced and access to public information is increased, as stated in CPAP outcome targets

To date, the project contributed to the 1) improvement in the communication system within the OPS, covered quality arrangements of the President's press conferences, meetings, visits at national and international level. 2) Improved the quality of monitoring of the national and international media, and the production of the monitoring bulletin twice a day presented to the president and relevant departments within OoP. 3) Improved the coordination component of OPS with media at different levels of communication, and enhanced the capacity of OPS to more effectively communicate with the Afghan people, national media and international audiences in a sustainable way which was essential for the overall success of the government communication in rehabilitation, development and other relevant issues.

#### 2. Capacity development.

Due to delay in the finalization of the communication strategy and which should have been followed up by the institutional capacity assessment, this limited the project capacity building initiatives. However in view of the OPS present structure, the project staff provided on the job training to the newly recruited staff on the different media related issues like media monitoring, media analysis and reporting. Additionally, the new the recruitment had taken place on the basis of merit, which has improved the efficiency and working quality. Partial procurement of the required equipments for the OPS also contributed in improving the institutional capacity of the OPS

### **3. Impact on direct and indirect beneficiaries.**

The direct beneficiary of the SSBSGC project is the Office of the Presidential Spokesperson OPS. Indirect beneficiaries of the SSBSGC project are the other departments of the President's Office, the spokespersons of the Afghan government ministries, media, Afghan citizens (at national and sub-national levels), and all concerned agencies, including donors and the international community. Because, all Afghan Government, Afghan public at national level and internationals are linked through a quality communication system, causes exchange or flow of information amongst them, leading towards increase of their awareness on the issues of the people and achievements of the government at all levels. However due to lack of the proper communication strategy and inadequate coordination at the national and sub national level within the Government and other stakeholders, did not yield sufficient awareness and trust on the government among the citizens.

## **Implementation strategy review**

Strengthening State Building through Strategic Government Communication (SSBSGC) project is a Direct Implementation Modality, called (DIM), which is implemented by UNDP, to ensure effective coordination amongst the main stakeholders and to ensure that efficient and transparent utilization of the project inputs are made available. The project has a Board which is Chaired by the UNDP Senior Deputy Country Director UNDP and Co-Chaired by a Spokesperson of the President. The objective of the Board is to guide and oversee project implementation and to ensure broad participation and transparency in the project related issues decision making. In addition to UNDP and OPS, the project donor (DfID) plays a key role on the Board.

### **1. Participatory/consultative processes**

As per output-1 of the SSBSGC project, which is the development of a communication strategy, participatory consultative meetings were organized, facilitated and coordinated by the project with all the stakeholders including the line Ministries, donors and Civil Societies for the collection of material is required at different stages of the assessment process of the present strategies. Also the project facilitated the workshop of the line ministries spokespersons which was the first initiative undertaken in regard to the coordination issues and challenges. These inputs and materials collected during the consultative process will help in finalization of the communication strategy.. According to output-2 of the project document, which is strengthening the capacity of OPS, again targets an audience at national and sub-national levels, through the provincial hubs units of OPS, and the national and international media.

All of the above activities take place through a coordination mechanism, which links the relevant stakeholders, leads to capacity building of project staff, and enhances media relations efforts and information management capacities, in order to ensure timely and quality achievement of the project targeted outputs.

### **2. Quality of partnerships**

Through the communication strategy development and strengthening of the OPS, the communication mechanism of the government with the Afghan public and international community will be improved. The strategy will cover the improvement of networking with concerned stakeholders, including ministries and the media, at different levels of sub-national, national and international. It ensures timely delivery of news and information on current affairs to the Afghan public (from districts up to the large cities) and to the OPS, which will be conveyed to the President and visa-versa. Through the networking and coordination,

experiences and resources will be shared, to increase quality, avoid duplication and ensure proper utilization of the available resources.

### **3. National ownership**

The OPS participated from the initiation of the project and were always consulted on various strategic issues and decisions. The Presidential Spokesperson regularly participated in the project board meetings in addition to bilateral meetings with the UNDP teams on various occasion and issues. The counterparts also participated in the recruitment and procurement processes and were regularly consulted for their advice which is a good sign of the national ownership. Also the project office consisting of 70 staff seconded inside the OPS falls under the direct leadership and guidance of the Spokesperson is significant move towards the national ownership.

Under the project outputs, which are development of the communication strategy for the government and capacity building of the OPS, it can be easily seen that both project outputs supported capacity building of Afghan Government institutions and offer expanded services to the Afghan public. By strengthening communication between government and public at national and sub-national levels, this gives us a clear picture of the national ownership of the project.

### **4. Sustainability**

The project output 1 is development of the government communication strategy. Capacity building of the OPS, as implementer of the communication strategy, is covered by project output 2. Both steps enable the government communication to operate in a quality and timely manner leading towards sustainability. Application of the developed communication strategy by the capable OPS team will result in information production and publication; comprehensive media monitoring system; media relations unit; provincial information unit; and the active administration of the project. Activities of the project will be increasingly managed by civil servants in the employ of the Government of Afghanistan.

Initial discussions and consultations were undertaken during the year in regard to developing the exit strategy and further enhancing the capacity of the OPS. The project team also consulted the Civil Service Commission in regard to the civil service reforms and the PRR plan.

## ***Management effectiveness review***

### **1. Quality of monitoring**

The project submitted Quarterly Project Reports to UNDP Country Office to report on the implementation progress; update the projects implementation challenges, including risk and issues and to suggest recommended actions.

The Project held Project Board meetings and produced status reports for the Project Board.. The project board meets on frequency basis to review work plan and discuss the progress of the project, and to address any issues affecting the project's performance and achievements of its objectives.

Additionally, UNDP programme Officer regularly reviewed the Annual Work Plan, Quarterly Plans and project budget and expenditures and visited the project site on regular bases to ensure the project progress towards outputs/outcome. Also a joint monitoring field mission was conducted to the North and Northeast to oversee the provincial Hubs activities and improve coordination with the stakeholders and Governors Offices.

## 2. Timely delivery of outputs

Although the project start and the recruitment of the consultants were delayed, which limited the progress against the annual deliverables and project outputs, still the project has made considerable progress in terms of the OPS operation and coordination with the international and national media, improvement in media outreach at the national and sub national level, holding press conferences and production of news bulletins

## 3. Resources allocation

The project is funded for three years until December 31, 2010, with a total budget of \$3,263,966. Although the project started late, the delivery for the 2008 is USD 102,294, 53.12. The project's development activities cover development of the government communication strategy for establishment of sustainable information and communication system and its implementation by a capable OSP team, which can be considered a. highly human capacity oriented project.

## 4. Cost-effective use of inputs

Much delay occurred in the project implementation phases, even though the cost effectiveness of the project is in place, and the OPS operation has not been affected. Efforts are being made towards proper utilization of the allocated project funds and luxury spending is being avoided. In some operation and support components the project the counterpart resources were utilized, including: fuel, lubrication, vehicle maintenance and electrical equipment, including computers

Since the project could not undertake the capacity assessment and gap analysis of the OPS due to delay in the recruitments of international consultants, counterpart's unavailability and inadequate will, the project did not produce the results/targets for the year 2008 which will have implications on the project budget and resources.

### III. Project results summary

#### **Output 1: An effective government communication strategy prepared and government communication with its citizens improved.**

During the 2008, under project output 1, efforts were made to lay the foundation for development of a quality communication strategy development.. Establishing a coordination mechanism amongst the government institutions, line ministry spokespersons to set around a table and discuss their issues, which will lead towards development of a responsive communication strategy. Contacts were established between project provincial hubs correspondences and the provincial governors of Kunduz and Balkh provinces. This can be seen as a useful step towards establishment of a coordination mechanism in support proper communication networks amongst the involved stakeholders. Recruitment of an international communication expert (to develop communication strategy) took place. The expert will develop the communication strategy which will be a framework for organizational re-engineering of the OPS efforts to implement the communication strategy. To enhance quality operation of the OPS, support is being provided to meet needs, on ad hoc basis, until the communication strategy is developed and the organizational re-engineering consultant is on board.

Due to delay in the resources availability , late recruitment of the national project manger and the international communication consultant for different reasons like unavailability of the selected candidates and lack of competent candidates , the project could only initiated the initial steps required towards moving to the finalization of the communication strategy .

#### **Output 2: Capacity of the OPS and provincial information ability developed for the implementation of an effective communication strategy**

In light of the project design nature annual target deliverables, little can be done on the project output number 2 until the project output number 1 has progressed to a reasonable point and the organizational re-engineering consultant is on board for assessment of the OPS present structure, which will enable the consultant to recommend the new form and shape of the OPS structure. Parallel to that, the routine activities of the President (which covers the international and national meeting, visits, press conferences, press releases, and other activities) also cannot be suspended. The project provided technical and HR support to the OPS to continue its routine activities, which covers the President's activities, including international and national meeting, visits, press conferences and press releases. Converting the contracts of the Bridging the Public Information Gap (BPIG) project staff (as available resources) from SSA (Special Services Agreement) to the SC (Service Contracts), until the communication strategy is developed and the organizational re-engineering consultant is on board for restructuring OPS.

Under the present structure of the OPS, the following Units had the following achievements:

##### **Media Monitoring**

Two Radio, more than 20 TVs, about 50 Internet sites and over than 20 printed publications (national and international) are monitored and Bulletins are designed, prepared (twice a day, morning and afternoon) and distributed to the departments of the President's Spokesperson for distribution.

##### **Media Relations:**

The project enhanced coordination with National Radio and Television V to broadcast the presidential events and news as a communication tool. The Staff improved liaison with the

Protocol Department of the President's Office regarding the President's schedules. Also they organized weekly press conferences for the Spokesperson of the President. They developed contacts with media. Similarly they liaising with the Ministry of Information Culture and youth Affairs. The project also maintained all types of contacts with national and international media. Press conferences of the President Spokesperson inside the palace and in other locations Office are facilitated. The official visits of the president at national and international level are covered by project. Provided quality translation service for OPS, including direct translation of the President's and guests meetings.

## IV. Implementation challenges

### *Project risks and actions*

Unstable and deteriorating security situation in parts of the country has hampered the activities of provincial correspondents, especially in the Eastern, Southern and South-East regions, and has disturbed the consistent coordination in the communication system between the capital and provinces.

### Project issues and actions

There has been insufficient coordination within the media system stakeholders, which has badly affected the communication system at national and sub-national level.

Signing of the project document at the second half of February and then transfer of funds are the causes for the project late start. It was not possible to recover it for the year to 2008, but can be used as a lesson learnt for the coming years.

Project did not have a manager, with the recruitment of the Project Manager taking place in July 2008.

## V. Lessons learnt and next steps

The project work plan needs to be realistic and practical. Proper planning and consultation is critical for the success of any project and programme. Timely recruitment of the staff is important for meeting the project outputs and deliverables and this is a lesson learnt for UNDP future development programme.

Coordination among stakeholders is critical for the successful implementation of the project.

## VI. Financial status and utilization

### Financial status

**Table 1: Contribution overview [01 January 2008- 31 December 2010]**

DONOR NAME	CONTRIBUTIONS		Contribution Balance
	Committed	Received	
UNDP	150,000.00	150,000.00	0.00
DfID	3,379,722	1,329,415.00	2,050,306.67
	3,529,721.67	1,479,415.00	2,050,306.67

**Table 2: Funding status (as of the end 2008)**

DONOR NAME	RECEIVED*	EXPENDITURES			PROJECT BALANCE	EARMARKED**	AVAILABLE FUNDING (as of 1 Jan of the 2009)	REMARKS
		Period Prior to the Reporting Year	Reporting Year Only	TOTAL				
UNDP	150,000.00		150,000	150,000.00	0			
DFID			842,126.47	842,126.47	487,288.53		487,289	
TOTAL		0.00	992,126	992,126	487,289	-	487,289	

### Financial utilization

The figures in this section (budget, expenditure, and balance) can refer only to the reporting period (1 January – 31 December 2008).

**Table 3: Annual expenditure by activity [1 January – 31 December 2008]**

Activity	Budget 2008	Expenditure (01 January -31 December 2008	Balance	Delivery Rate
ACTIVITY01- Drafting Multi-Year Communication Strategy	89,744.97	165,213.20	(81,611.00)	95.0%
ACTIVITY02- Capacity Development	751,047.85	726,072.29	27,008.45	
ACTIVITY03- Technical Assistance and Management Cost	136,501.48	37,455.10	107,108.29	
<b>GMIS 7%</b>	<b>67,063.77</b>	<b>63,385.87</b>	<b>3,678</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1044632.2</b>	<b>992126.47</b>	<b>56,183.64</b>	

**Table 4: Annual expenditure by donor [1 January 2008 – 31 December 2008]**

Donor	Activity	Budget 2008	Expenditure (01 January - 31 December 2008	Balance	Balance
UNDP	ACTIVITY01- Drafting Multi-Year Communication Strategy	45,000.00	45,000.00	-	100.0%
	ACTIVITY02- Capacity Development	75,000.00	75,000.00	-	
	ACTIVITY03- Technical Assistance and Management Cost	30,000.00	30,000.00	-	
<b>Subtotal-UNDP</b>		<b>150,000.00</b>	<b>150,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>	
DFID	ACTIVITY01- Drafting Multi-Year Communication Strategy	44,744.97	120,213.20	(81,611.00)	94.2%
	ACTIVITY02- Capacity Development	676,047.85	651072.2935	27,008.45	
	ACTIVITY03- Technical Assistance and Management Cost	106,501.48	7,455.10	107,108.29	
<b>GMS 7%</b>		<b>67,063.77</b>	<b>63,385.87</b>	<b>3,677.90</b>	
<b>Subtotal- DFID</b>		<b>894,358.06</b>	<b>842,126.47</b>	<b>56,183.64</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1,044,358.06</b>	<b>992,126.47</b>	<b>56,183.64</b>	<b>95.0%</b>